

## The Council's Principles for Partnership Working

Updated following Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 11 October 2010.

### 1 When should we work in Partnership?

1.1 Working in partnership can bring significant additional benefits to the people who live, work and study in our area, especially when partners pool resources and skills to achieve a common aim.

1.2 However, partnership working can sometimes be complicated, over bureaucratic and resource intensive in relation to the outcomes achieved. Therefore, we need to be clear when we will and when we wont join a partnership.

1.3 The criteria in Principle 1 should be used to 'test' whether the Council should enter (or remain) in any partnership.

#### 1.4 **Principle 1**

*The City Council will only work in partnership with other organisations when 1 or more of the following criteria are met:*

- a) *It helps us achieve our Vision Statements*
- b) *It helps deliver the Sustainable Community Strategy*
- c) *We have a legal duty to do so*
- d) *It can help us lever in additional funding*
- e) *It saves us money*
- f) *It reduces risk (e.g. to the Council's reputation)*

### 2. Effective Partnership Working

2.1 We must also ensure that the partnerships we do join are working effectively, that the Council's role is clear and that the needs of the City are met. In particular, we need to ensure:

- Effective governance arrangements are in place
- There is clear accountability between the partnerships and the City Council

- The partnerships are open and accessible
- Resources are identified and used effectively
- Effective scrutiny arrangements are in place

2.2 The following paragraphs include further Principles that should be followed by the City Council to ensure that the partnerships we join are working effectively.

### **3 Effective Governance**

3.1 Effective governance is important to ensure that each partner:

- is clear about the role and focus of the partnership
- takes ownership of an agreed set of objectives
- is clear about how the objectives will be achieved
- is clear about how progress will be measured
- is clear about key risks and how they will be managed

#### **3.2 Principle 2**

*We will ensure the partnerships we belong to have effective governance arrangements including:*

- a) Clear Terms of Reference*
- b) Clear objectives, targets and performance management arrangements*
- c) Effective systems to manage risk*
- d) Effective systems to manage complaints*

### **4 Accountability**

4.1 Clear accountability is important to ensure that informed and appropriate decisions are made and that, where necessary, 'in principle' decisions are brought back through the City Council's own decision making and scrutiny processes to be confirmed (or otherwise).

#### **4.2 Principle 3**

*We will ensure there is clear accountability between the partnerships and the City Council by:*

- a) *Ensuring there is appropriate City Council Member representation*
- b) *Ensuring the City Council Member representative is clear about their remit and the type and extent of decisions they can make on behalf of the City Council.*
- c) *Ensuring that the City Council Member representative takes relevant decisions back through the City Council's decision making and scrutiny process.*
- d) *Ensuring the City Council Member representative is fully briefed before each meeting*
- e) *Ensuring nominated opposition Spokes are briefed before each meeting*

## **5 Openness and Accessibility**

5.1 It is important that the partnerships we belong to are open and accessible so that:

- The public and elected Members can easily find out about the issues that are being discussed and the decisions that are being made
- The public and elected Members can find out who to talk to if they want to try and influence decisions
- The public and elected members can attend a partnership meeting to ask questions and listen to debates
- The public and elected Members can read reports before meetings take place and read the minutes afterwards

### 5.2 **Principle 4**

*We will ensure partnerships are open and accessible by:*

- a) *Holding all meetings in public*
- b) *Publicising meetings in advance on the Council's website*
- c) *Ensuring agendas and reports can be accessed from our website at least 5 working days in advance of the meeting.*
- d) *Ensuring minutes can be accessed from our website as soon as possible after the meeting.*
- e) *Ensuring the names and contact details of the City Council's lead Member, opposition Spokes and lead officer for the partnership are published on our website.*
- f) *Ensuring those partnerships have effective systems to engage with the public*

*Note: For partnerships administered by the City all details will be hosted on the City Council's website. For partnerships administered by partner organisations, clear links will be maintained from the City Council's website to the relevant place on the partner's website.*

## **6 Use of Resources**

- 6.1 The term 'resources' can mean staff time, money, buildings, equipment etc.
- 6.2 We must ensure that the partnerships we belong to have the resources they need to deliver their objectives. We must also ensure that the resources allocated by the City Council are appropriate and used effectively.

### **Principle 5**

*We will ensure partnerships have the resources needed to deliver their objectives and that they use them effectively by:*

- a) Ensuring the City Council commits the resources necessary to meet its obligations to the partnership.*
- b) Ensuring City Council resources are used effectively and not duplicated (e.g. by minimising the number of officers attending meetings, disseminating information effectively etc.)*
- c) Challenging partners to ensure they commit appropriate resources*
- d) Reviewing the City Council's resource commitment annually via portfolio plans*
- e) Ensuring City Council Members have opportunities to scrutinise the City Council's partnership work*

## **7 Joint Scrutiny**

- 7.1 The existing Joint Accountability Committee (JAC) was set up to scrutinise the performance of Cambridgeshire Together. JAC currently comprises elected Members from the County Council (5) and the District Councils (1 each) and 1 Local Authority appointed Member from Cambridgeshire Police Authority. Cllr Ward currently represents the City Council on JAC.